

Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs

Location of Meeting: Virtual – Microsoft Teams

Members Present:

- Larry Stubblefield, Associate Administrator, Office of Veterans Business Development, SBA
- Fran Perez-Wilhite, Chairperson, SBA Advisory Committee on Veteran Business Affairs (ACVBA); Program Manager, North Carolina Military Business Center
- Rob Bailey, President, Bailey Information Tech Cons, LLC
- Jeff Hall, National Employment Director, Disabled American Veterans
- Glenett Hannah, CEO/President, Hannah Innovative Solutions
- Lynn Lowder, Co-Founder & CEO, Veterans Business Project
- Kandis Porter, Founder & Managing Director, Effective Flow Connections, LLC
- Joe Sharpe, Director, National Veterans Employment & Education Division, American Legion

The regular meeting of the ACVBA was called to order at 9:00 AM on 12/02/2021 by Stan Kurtz

1. Meeting Highlights:

- a. Opening remarks – Fran Perez-Wilhite, ACVBA Chairperson, provided opening remarks including observing a moment of silence for Latonya Barton, cofounder of Kingdomware Technologies, who passed away in November. Ms. Barton was instrumental to the United States Supreme Court Kingdomware Decision of the "Rule of Two."
- b. Introduction – Larry Stubblefield, Associate Administrator, Office Veterans Business Development, SBA - Update on status of programs at OVBD. In FY 2021, SBA's Boots to Business (B2B) provided training to more than 20,000 participants and 22 Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs) served nearly 59,000 clients. OVBD kicked off FY 2022 with SBA's 8th annual National Veterans Small Business Week (NVSBW) reaching close to 12,000 participants in nearly 200 events nationwide. Two notable NVSBW events attended by SBA Administrator Guzman include the opening of a new VBOC at University of Maryland, and the opening of University of Syracuse, Institute for Veterans and Military Families, National Veterans Resource Center. The Administrator also participated in the National Veterans Small Business Coalition's VETS21 event, held in Orlando, Florida. Lastly, Administrator Guzman has included VOSB representation - Joe Sharpe, American Legion - on the SBA Council on Underserved Communities.
- c. Presentation 1 – Sharon Ridley, Executive Director, Acquisition Policy, Office of Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) – VA's Small Business Program Accomplishments: In FY 2021, VA OSDBU met with the small business community leads for business development by conducting 51 training webinars that educated entrepreneurs on topics like creating an effective capability statement and how to become procurement-ready. The results of VA's efforts yielded high customer satisfaction rates. The Women Mean Business Veteran Small Business Summit took place on March 31st, 2021, in collaboration with the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce. Twenty-four federal agencies and offices and 11 prime vendors conducted more than 192 engagements with more than 200 women veteran-owned small

businesses. VA's OSDBU strategic outreach and communication program provides educational opportunities to veterans growing their businesses; the Direct Access Program opens doors for small businesses by providing ways for them to engage with procurement decision-makers; and the Women Veteran-Owned Small Business Initiative (WVOSBI) organized the first Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the OSDBU and non-profit organization PenFed Foundation, has launched a women veteran bootcamp accelerator designed to educate and empower women veteran-owned small businesses. WVOSBI is also partnering with the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland women business centers to develop VetBizLady Start to prepare women veteran entrepreneurs for government contracting. The Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) continues to excel while it prepares to transition over to SBA. As of December 1st, 2021, there were 12,165 service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, and 3,095 veteran-owned small businesses recorded in the vendor information page. Increasing teaming and subcontracting opportunities is a major priority for FY 2022, and VA OSDBU will continue to encourage the use of VIP as a resource for any potential veteran business partners. Members Q&A: Fran Perez-Wilhite mentioned an uptick across multiple VISNs awarding sole-source contracts that are non-COVID-related and asked if VA can look into this. VA OSDBU will take the question for action and provide a response to the Committee.

- d. Presentation 2 - Terrence Moultrie, Supervisory Business Opportunity Specialist, Office of Government Contracting & Business Development, SBA and Cordell Smith, VA OSDBU Deputy Director for Acquisition Policy – Provided an update on the 2021 NDAA and CVE Transfer from VA to SBA and continuing ongoing efforts to be transparent by providing monthly notification regarding the CVE transfer, including a reminder to send questions to cvetransfer@sba.gov. Members Q&A: Kandis Porter asked if VA is making an exception to allow people to go ahead and apply for recertification right now, regardless of when they're due in 2022? Cordell Smith will take the question for follow up and provide a response to the Committee whether something can be set up to allow recertifications to occur outside of the established timeframes (extended time frame vs 120 days prior).
- e. Presentation 3 - Dan Upham, Chief, Micro-Enterprise Development, Office of Financial Assistance, Office of Capital Access, SBA – Provided an update on SBA's microloan program that offers lending, training and technical assistance operated through 150 non-profit intermediary lenders participating in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.
- f. Presentation 4 – Terrence Sutherland, Director, Office of Entrepreneurship Education, Office of Entrepreneurial Development, SBA – provided an update on the Community Navigator Program. The program currently has over 500 organizations located across the country. Some of these organizations include: the International Rescue Committee, LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), National Urban League, Oweesta Corporation, Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), the U.S. Black, Hispanic, and Pan Asian American Chambers of Commerce, and the National Disability Institute. A complete list can be found at: [Community Navigators \(sba.gov\)](https://www.sba.gov/community-navigators).

- g. Presentation 5 – Bridget Weston, CEO, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) – Provided an overview of SCORE, how it works with other resource partners and their mission to foster vibrant small business communities through mentoring and education, what it means to be a SCORE volunteer and how to become a volunteer by going to their website at SCORE.org/volunteer.
- h. Presentation 6 – Janie Barrera, President & CEO, LiftFund - Provided an overview of Liftfund’s programs, specifically how they provide working capital to business startups & existing businesses and providing technical assistance or training and mentoring and connecting people together.
- i. Presentation 7 – Grant Bennett, Director of Veteran Programs, PeopleFund – Gave a presentation regarding PeopleFund and the small business lending provided throughout the state of Texas with a focus on veteran entrepreneurship and access to capital and the Veteran Loan Fund-program that is geared towards veteran entrepreneurs.
- j. Presentation 8 – Hark Herald, Chief Operating Officer, Bunker Labs – Highlighted Bunker Labs supporting military, military spouses, and veterans small business owners and startups with a focus on inspiring, equipping, and connecting the military-connected community within both, and their Veterans in Residence, CEO Circle and Ambassador Cohort programs. Member Q&A: Joe Sharpe asked if there are plans to expand to rural areas in some of the southern states and Hark Herald responded that there are 40 communities identified pre-pandemic where either assistance is becoming available through the Veterans in Residence program or virtual connections.
- k. Presentation 9 – Elizabeth Sullivan, President, and Ann Sullivan, founder, Madison Services Group – briefed the committee on their work to advocate in the federal policy arena to bring changes to small business acquisition and how their organization works with Congress to address reforms out of Executive Order 13985 – Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government that was released on January 20, 2021.
- l. Presentation 10 – Lisa Hallett, Executive Director, Wear Blue: Run to Remember – Briefed the committee on its mission to honor the service and sacrifice of American military through active remembrance. They support surviving spouses, provide youth mentorship programs, provide aid to junior enlisted service members. The SDVOSB Procurement Program requires that 51 percent of the control and management of the business is done by a service-disabled veteran, with a few circumstances that allow this control and assignment to transfer to the spouse or permanent caregiver of a veteran who passes away as a result of his or her disability. This policy would allow the surviving spouse to maintain the program eligibility and access to procurements in the Federal Government that’s traditionally reserved for SDVOSBs.
- m. ACVBA Subcommittee Reports: Subcommittee on Veterans Access to Capital, led by Lynne Lowder, is focusing on aging veterans who own a business with no succession plans in place, changes to improve SBA’s loan programs for veteran-owned small

businesses, and use of Dept. of Treasury CDFI program as source of funding for veteran-owned small businesses.

- n. Subcommittee on Public Relations, led by Kandis Porter, has created an ACVBA social media presence via Twitter and LinkedIn and are using the tools to help socialize ACVBA meetings, SBA veterans programs, and other activities.
2. The next meeting will be held at Virtual Microsoft Teams on March 3, 2022, at 9:00 AM.
 3. The meeting was adjourned at 3:36, PM by Stan Kurtz, OVBD